

Message Text

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USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0475

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 9464

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CG, UR

SUBJECT: ZAIRIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS: ON THE MEND?

1. DURING THE ANGOLAN WAR, SOVIET-GOZ RELATIONS WERE NEAR THE BREAKING POINT. IN THE FIRST MONTHS OF 1976, THE MUTUAL HOSTILITY STAYED OUT OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND WAS EVIDENT ONLY FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH HIGH GOZ OFFICIALS AND FROM THE SOUR LOOKS ON SOVIET DIPLOMATS' FACES HERE.

2. SINCE THE SUMMER, HOWEVER, WE HAVE SEEN INTELLIGENCE REPORTS WHICH LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS MAY BE PAYING OFF. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAS RETURNED RECENTLY FROM LEAVE IN MOSCOW WITH WHAT SEEM TO BE INSTRUCTIONS TO DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO ARRANGE HIGH LEVEL VISITS AND SIGN CULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL ACCORDS. AND WE NOW UNDERSTAND THAT THE ZAIRIAN MINISTER OF COMMERCE, DUGA, WILL SOON DEPART FOR MOSCOW TO SIGN SUCH A COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT.

3. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN A GRADUAL NORMALIZATION IN RECENT MONTHS, CHANGE IN GOZ ATTITUDE TOWARD SOVIET UNION WAS PARTICULARLY MANIFESTED ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE 59TH ANNIVERSARY OF OCTOBER REVOLUTION. UNLIKE LAST YEAR WHEN HE SENT

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NOTHING, MOBUTU SENT CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO PODGORNYY IN WHICH

HE EXPRESSED "THE WISH OF ALL THE MILITANTS OF THE POPULAR MOVEMENT OF THE REVOLUTION (ZAIRE'S NATIONAL PARTY) TO SEE STRENGTHENED THE RELATIONS OF COOPERATION WHICH WE MAINTAIN WITHIN A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF OUR TWO PEOPLES AND THE LIBERATION OF PEOPLES UNDER FOREIGN OPPRESSION." AT SAME TIME, MOBUTU REFERRED TO SUCCESSES OF SOVIET PEOPLE IN MANY AREAS AND PARTICULARLY IN THAT OF PEACE.

4. IN ADDITION, SOVIET RECEPTION COMMEMORATING ANNIVERSARY WAS WELL ATTENDED BY HIGH FONAFFS OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, THE FONMIN'S CHIEF OF CABINET AND THE DIRECTORS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. THIS WAS IN SHARP CONTRAST WITH PREVIOUS YEAR WHEN ONLY ONE LOW RANKING OFFICIAL SHOWED UP.

5. COMMENT: ADMITTEDLY A FEW INTELLIGENCE REPORTS AND ONE WELL ATTENDED RECEPTION DO NOT NECESSARILY PRESAGE A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOSCOW AND KINSHASA, BUT THE DIRECTION OF CURRENT MOVES BY BOTH SIDES BEARS CLOSE WATCHING. FROM MOBUTU'S POINT OF VIEW, AND IN LIGHT OF HIS BASIC PRAGMATISM, BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION INCREASE HIS OPTIONS -- ALWAYS A CENTRAL AIM OF ZAIRIAN FOREIGN POLICY.

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